

## Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PRS-01 PM-04 DODE-00 SCCT-01 SS-15

NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 MC-02 ACDA-07

/051 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:RSBARRETT:NB

APPROVED BY AF:WESCHAUFLE JR.

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DOD/ISA:JREED

AF/P:JPOPE

S/CCT:RAFEARY

AF/E:WBCOOTE

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P 030004Z APR 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 080282

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, ET, US

SUBJECT: DELIVERY OF F-5E AIRCRAFT; PRESS GUIDANCE

REF: A) ADDIS ABABA 2296; B) STATE 052374

1. WE CONCUR THAT IT WOULD BE BEST IF WE COULD AVOID  
IDENTIFYING NATURE OF CARGO BEING BROUGHT IN BY C-5  
FLIGHT NOW SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 15, NOT ONLY IN CONNECTION  
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WITH INCREASED ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI TENSIONS OVER DJIBOUTI

BUT OUT OF CONCERN FOR ITS EFFECT ON CISCO III. IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES HERE, HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT SEEM POSSIBLE. AS TRANSACTION WILL HAVE BEEN DECLASSIFIED PRIOR TO DELIVERY, WILL BE KNOWN TO SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS WHOSE TERRITORY THE C-5 WILL OVERFLY, AND IS BOUND TO BE KNOWN AT AN EARLY DATE AFTER AIRCRAFT ARE OFF-LOADED, WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT AVOIDING IDENTIFICATION OF CARGO WOULD DELAY EARLY SURFACING OF THIS INFORMATION; FURTHERMORE IT COULD ATTRACT MORE ATTENTION TO TRANSACTION BY WHAT WOULD APPEAR TO SOME JOURNALISTS AS USG ATTEMPT TO HIDE IT.

2. THEREFORE WE BELIEVE OUR OVERALL INTERESTS BEST SERVED AT THIS SENSITIVE JUNCTURE BY BEING CANDID WITH

PRESS TO START WITH. IN RESPONSE TO ANY QUESTIONS FOLLOWING DELIVERY WE SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO AVOID IDENTIFICATION OF AIRCRAFT, BUT STRESS THOSE ASPECTS OF THE TRANSACTION WHICH HOPEFULLY WILL MINIMIZE SENSATIONAL REPORTING IN THE MEDIA. THOSE ASPECTS ARE: A) NEGOTIATIONS OVER PURCHASE OF F5ES HAVE BEEN GOING ON SINCE EARLY 1974; B) TRANSACTION FITS INTO A LONG RANGE PROGRAM OF MODERNIZATION FOR PMG ARMED FORCES, INCLUDING THE REPLACEMENT OF OBSOLETE ITEMS, IN WHICH USG HAD AGREED TO PARTICIPATE; AND C) THIS IS CASH SALE, COMPLETELY PAID FOR BY PMG, INCLUDING THE AIR DELIVERY.

3. WITH ABOVE OBJECTIVES IN MIND WE SUBMIT FOLLOWING PRESS GUIDANCE FOR CONSIDERATION, TO BE USED BY EMBASSY IN ADDIS AND DEPARTMENT, AND HOPEFULLY FOLLOWED IN SUBSTANCE BY PMG. EMBASSY ADDIS SHOULD DISCUSS IT WITH PMG AND LET US HAVE BOTH ITS OWN AND PMG'S REACTIONS. WOULD ALSO WELCOME COMMENT FROM KHARTOUM.

4. QUESTION: WE HEAR THAT THE USG HAS JUST DELIVERED NEW MODERN AIRCRAFT TO ETHIOPIA. CAN YOU FILL US IN?

ANSWER: YES, EIGHT F5E FIGHTER AIRCRAFT WERE AIRLIFTED INTO ETHIOPIA ON APRIL 15. THIS REPRESENTS A CASH PURCHASE BY THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE CULMINATION

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OF NEGOTIATIONS WHICH BEGAN IN EARLY 1974. AT THAT TIME WE WERE ASKED TO ASSIST IN A MODERNIZATION PROGRAM FOR ETHIOPIA'S ARMED FORCES. WE AGREED TO DO SO BY MEANS OF CREDIT AND CASH SALES OF ITEMS NEEDED TO REPLACE OBSOLETE EQUIPMENT INCLUDING AIRCRAFT. THIS WAS IN KEEPING WITH OUR PROGRAM OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA WHICH BEGAN IN 1953 WITH THE SIGNING OF A MUTUAL DEFENSE ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT (MDAA) BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

QUESTION: WILL THESE AIRCRAFT BE USED IN ERITREA?

ANSWER: THE F5E IS PRIMARILY AN AIR DEFENSE INTERCEPTOR AND WAS ACQUIRED FOR AIR DEFENSE PURPOSES.

QUESTION: DOES THIS DELIVERY HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE RECENT FLARE-UP OVER DJIBOUTI?

ANSWER: NOT, IT COULD NOT, SINCE, AS I SAID, IT HAS

BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION SINCE EARLY 1974 AND THE ACTUAL SALES AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED LAST YEAR.

-- QUESTION: WHAT EFFECT WILL THIS DELIVERY HAVE ON THE CAPTURED AMERICANS IN ERITREA?

-- ANSWER: WE SHOULD THINK THERE WOULD BE NONE. THE CAPTURED MEN ARE CIVILIANS WHO HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH OUR MILITARY SHIPMENTS TO ETHIOPIA.

-- QUESTION: WASN'T CESSATION OF US ASSISTANCE ONCE CITED AS A CONDITION FOR THE RELEASE OF THE MEN?

-- ANSWER: INSURGENT SPOKESMEN ONCE CITED SUCH A CONDITION. SINCE THAT TIME TWO CAPTIVES HAVE BEEN RELEASED UNCONDITIONALLY AND WE LOOK TO THE EARLY RELEASE OF THE OTHER THREE.

5. IF QUESTIONS ON TRANSACTION ARE ASKED PRIOR TO APRIL 15 WE INTEND TO TAKE THE QUESTION AND LATER INFORM THE INQUIRER PRIVATELY THAT WE ONLY COMMENT ON SUCH TRANSACTIONS AFTER THEIR COMPLETION. IF EMBASSY IS CONFIDENTIAL

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QUESTIONED BEFORE APRIL 15 WE SUGGEST IT REPLY THAT IT HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO REFER ALL SUCH QUERIES TO THE DEPARTMENT. KISSINGER

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## Message Attributes

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